

Amendments to the Specification

[0018] A product having the construction illustrated in FIGS. 2 to 4 is prepared by the process of FIG. 1. Referring to FIG. 2, a foamable plastic layer 1 containing a foaming agent is applied over a sheet substrate 2. The combination is then heated to gel the plastic layer 1. A first printing ink 3 which contains a photoinitiator and a second printing ink 4 which contains an expansion inhibitor and a photoinitiator are applied in a first and second pattern, respectively, to gelled plastic layer 1. A clear liquid curable coating 5 (see FIG. 3) is applied over the entire surface of gelled plastic layer 1 and the first and second printing inks 3, 4. After heating the curable coating 5 to gel and soften it, the softened curable coating 5 is mechanically embossed in a first embossing step with a textured roll to create a first texture 6. The textured curable coating is then subjected to ultraviolet light 7 and the product fused in an oven to cause that portion of the curable coating 5 which does not overlie the printing inks 3, 4 to smooth out so that the textures attributable to the first mechanical embossing step disappear in those areas (see FIG. 4). Furthermore, those portions of the gelled plastic layer 1 which do not contain the inhibitor applied with the second printing ink 4, foam and expand thereby chemically embossing the curable coating 5 (see FIGS. 3 and 4). The surface areas of the curable coating which have smoothed out are then mechanically embossed in a second embossing step to create a second texture 8. The product may then be optionally coated with a performance coating (not shown).

[0046] Subjecting the product to these temperatures for this period of time fuses the substrate, the plastic layer, the printing inks and the curable coating together and foams and expands those portions of the foamable plastic layer which do not underlie the second printing ink which contains an inhibitor, thereby chemically embossing the

curable coating. Furthermore, those portions (i.e., surface areas) of the curable coating which were not previously cured, i.e., do not overlie either the first or second printing inks, will relax such that the deformation and texturing in the still curable coating in these areas attributable to the first mechanical embossing step to this portion disappear, i.e. smooth over. More particularly, during this step that portion of the curable coating which has not been cured (crosslinked) during UV exposure undergoes relaxation which has the effect of smoothing the textured surface, while that portion of the curable coating that has been cured during UV curing retains its textured appearance. This relaxation phenomenon is one that requires the first overall embossing to be conducted at a temperature as low as possible to minimize the plastic component of the mechanical deformation induced in the curable coating by the embossing roll.